

***H*unting is a sport filled with unique rewards, including opportunities to develop a special closeness with nature. But in a world where the public increasingly questions the value of hunting, hunters face unique challenges. Not only must we conserve wildlife and habitat, we also must demonstrate the integrity of our sport. To ensure our hunting heritage is not lost, we must behave responsibly.**



The following pledge was prepared by hunters for hunters. In 1992, the Isaak Walton League of America convened a panel of hunting and conservation leaders to develop a code of conduct for hunters.

Numerous representatives from hunting organizations, hunting-related industries and federal and state agency hunter education experts also contributed to the code. The following pledge is the product of these efforts. It may be used freely by any hunter or hunting group and can be adopted – or adapted – to address hunting of specific species, hunting in certain regions and different hunting methods. Hunters who take the pledge, and insist their fellow hunters do likewise, can help create a brighter future for the sport.

The Hunter's code of Conduct was created cooperatively by the:

International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Izaak Walton League of America
National Rifle Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Tread Lightly, Inc.
Sport Fishing Institute
Times Mirror Magazines Conservation Council
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Extension Service
Wildlife Management Institute

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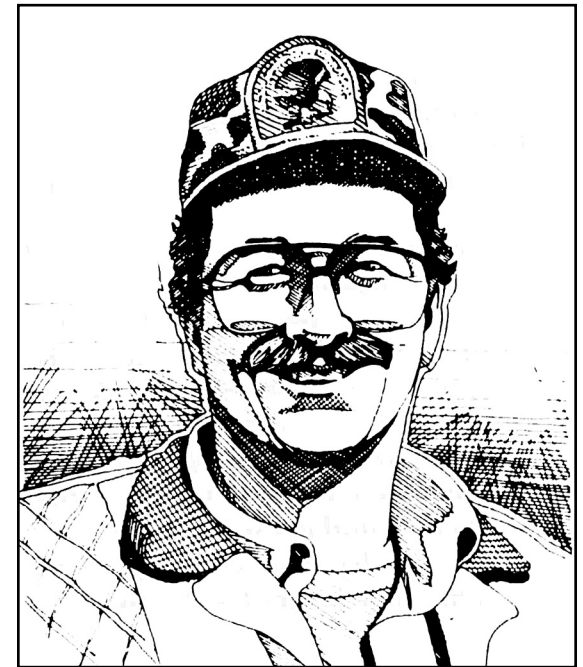
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Responsibility and Respect

A Code of Conduct for Hunters



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A Hunter's Pledge

Responsible hunting provides unique challenges and rewards. However, the future of the sport depends on each hunter's behavior and ethics. Therefore, as a hunter, I pledge to:

Respect the environment and wildlife

- Show respect for the wildlife you hunt by taking only clean, killing shots, then retrieving and properly handling your game. Take only what you will use, even if it is under the legal limit.
- Learn to tread lightly while afield. Use vehicles only on established roads and trails, practice low impact camping and travel, and pack out your trash, including cigarette butts and spent shell casings.
- Report illegal activities immediately.

Respect property and landowners

- Always get permission to hunt on private land.
- Close any gates you open, and never damage crops or property, including fences, outbuildings and livestock.
- Alert landowners or land managers about any problems you find on their property.
- Share your game with the landowner, or say thank you in some other way.

Show consideration for nonhunters

- Remember that the future of hunting depends on hunters and nonhunter alike. Be considerate of nonhunters' sensibilities, and strive to leave them with positive images of hunting and hunters.
- Don't flaunt your kill. Treat game carcasses in an inoffensive manner, particularly during transport.
- Be considerate of all outdoor users, including other hunters.

Hunt Safely

- Exercise caution at all times.
- Fire your gun or bow only when you are absolutely sure of your target and its background. Use binoculars, not your rifle scope, to identify your target.
- Wear hunter orange whenever appropriate or required while afield.
- Remember that hunting and alcohol don't mix.

Know and obey the law

- Obtain proper tags and licenses.
- Hunt only in allowed areas and during designated times and seasons. Read hunting regulations carefully.
- Obey bag and possession limits.
- Use only legal hunting methods and equipment.

Support wildlife and habitat conservation

- Provide hands-on and financial support for conservation of game and nongame species and their habitats.
- Learn more about wildlife and habitat issues, and urge policymakers to support strong conservation initiatives.
- Become involved in wildlife conservation organizations and their programs.
- Purchase state and federal wildlife conservation stamps, even if such stamps are not required for hunting.

Pass on an ethical hunting tradition

- Invite a young person or a nonhunter next time you go afield to scout or hunt.
- Attend a hunter education course, and urge others to do the same.
- Set high ethical standards for future generations of hunters to help ensure hunting will continue.

Strive to improve my outdoor skills and understanding of wildlife

- Know the limitations of your skills and equipment, and hunt within those limits.
- Improve your outdoor skills to become more observant, a better hunter and a better teacher.
- Sight-in your firearm and bow, and practice shooting to ensure a clean kill in the field.
- Learn more about the habits and habitats of game and nongame wildlife and their management needs.

Hunt only with ethical hunters

- Take pride in being an ethical hunter.
- Insist that your hunting partners behave in a responsible, ethical manner.
- Compete only with yourself.

By following these principles of conduct each time I go afield, I will give my best to the sport, the public, the environment and myself. The responsibility to hunt ethically is mine; the future of hunting depends on me.

